

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF PUERTO RICO

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff

v.

CRIMINAL 05-0260 (JAG)

ANTONIO CÉSAR FERNÁNDEZ-
DURÁN,

Defendant

MAGISTRATE JUDGE'S REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION
RE: RULE 11(c)(1)(B) PROCEEDINGS (PLEA OF GUILTY)

I. Personal Background

On August 3, 2005, Antonio César Fernández-Durán, the defendant herein, was charged in a two count indictment. The defendant agrees to plea guilty to count one of the indictment.

Count one charges that the defendant being an alien previously deported from the United States, was found in the United States at or near Carolina, Puerto Rico, at the Luis Muñoz International Airport, without obtaining, prior to his reembarkation at a place outside the United States, the express consent from the Attorney General of the United States, or his successor, the Secretary of Homeland Security, acting through the Under Secretary for Border and Transportation Security, pursuant to 6 U.S.C. §§ 202(3), 202(4) and 557, to such alien's reapplying for admission.

Defendant's previous deportation or removal, in 2002, was subsequent to a conviction, in 2000, for a felony, to wit: criminal possession of controlled substance (cocaine), for which he received a sentence of imprisonment of not less than two

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years and not more than six years. All in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 1326(a)(1)(2) and (b)(1).

II. Consent to Proceed Before a Magistrate Judge

Yesterday, while assisted by Max Pérez-Bouret, Esq., the defendant, by consent, appeared before me in order to change his previous not guilty plea to a plea of guilty as to count one of the indictment.

In open court the defendant was questioned as to the purpose of the hearing being held. The defendant responded that the purpose of the hearing was to plead guilty. The defendant was advised of his right to have all proceedings, including the change of plea hearing, before a United States district judge. Defendant was given notice of: (a) the nature and purpose of the hearing; (b) the fact that all inquiries were to be conducted under oath and that it was expected that his answers would be truthful (he was also explained that the consequences of lying under oath could lead to a perjury charge); and (c) his right to have the change of plea proceedings presided over by a district judge instead of a magistrate judge. The defendant was also explained the differences between the appointment and functions of the two. The defendant consent to proceed before this magistrate judge.

III. Proceedings Under Rule 11, Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure

A. Compliance With Requirements Rule 11(c)(1)

Rule 11 of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure governs the acceptance of guilty pleas to federal criminal violations. Pursuant to Rule 11, in order for a plea of guilty to constitute a valid waiver of the defendant's right to trial, guilty pleas must be knowing and voluntary: "Rule 11 was intended to ensure that a defendant who pleads guilty does so with an 'understanding of the nature of the charge and consequences of his plea.'" United States v. Cotal-Crespo, 47 F.3d 1, 4 (1st Cir. 1995) (quoting McCarthy v. United States, 394 U.S. 459, 467 (1969)). [There are three core concerns in these proceedings]: 1) absence of coercion; 2) understanding of the charges; and 3) knowledge of the consequences of the guilty plea. United States v. Cotal-Crespo, 47

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3 F.3d at 4 (citing United States v. Allard, 926 F.2d 1237, 1244-45 (1st
4 Cir. 1991)).

5 United States v. Hernández-Wilson, 186 F.3d 1, 5 (1st Cir. 1999).

6 In response to further questioning, defendant was explained and he
7 understood that if convicted on count one, he was exposed to a term of
8 imprisonment of not more than 20 years, a fine of not more than \$250,000, and a
9 term of supervised release of not more than three years. Prior to the time of
10 sentencing, the defendant shall pay a special assessment of \$100, per offense, to be
11 deposited in the Crime Victim Fund, pursuant 18 U.S.C. 3013(a).

12 Defendant was advised that the ultimate sentence was a matter solely for the
13 court to decide in its discretion and that, even if the maximum imprisonment term
14 and fine were to be imposed upon him, he later could not withdraw his guilty plea
15 if he was unhappy with the sentence of the court. The defendant understood this.

16 Defendant was explained what the supervised release term means. It was
17 emphasized that cooperation with the United States Probation officer would assist
18 the court in reaching a fair sentence.

19 Emphasis was made on the fact that at this stage, no prediction or promises
20 as to the sentence to be imposed could be made by anyone. Defendant responded to
21 questions in that no promises, threats, inducements or predictions as to what
22 sentence will be imposed have been made to him.

23 B. Admonishment of Constitutional Rights

24 To assure defendant's understanding and awareness of his rights, defendant
25 was advised of his right:

26 1. To remain silent at trial and be presumed innocent, since it is the
27 government who has the burden of proving his guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.
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3 2. To testify or not to testify at trial, and that no comment could be made by
4 the prosecution in relation to his decision not to testify.

5 3. To a speedy trial before a district judge and a jury, at which he would be
6 entitled to see and cross examine the government witnesses, present evidence on his
7 behalf, and challenge the government's evidence.

8 4. To have a unanimous verdict rendered by a jury of twelve persons which
9 would have to be convinced of defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt by means
10 of competent evidence.

11 5. To use the subpoena power of the court to compel the attendance of
12 witnesses.

13 Upon listening to the defendant's responses, observing his demeanor and his
14 speaking with his attorney, that to the best of counsel's belief defendant had fully
15 understood his rights, it is determined that defendant is aware of his constitutional
16 rights.

17 C. Consequences of Pleading Guilty

18 Upon advising defendant of his constitutional rights, he was further advised
19 of the consequences of pleading guilty. Specifically, defendant was advised that by
20 pleading guilty and upon having his guilty plea accepted by the court, he will be
21 giving up the above rights and would be convicted solely on his statement that he is
22 guilty.

23 Furthermore, the defendant was admonished of the fact that by pleading guilty
24 he would not be allowed later on to withdraw his plea because he eventually might
25 disagree with the sentence imposed, and that when he were under supervised
26 release, and upon violating the conditions of such release, that privilege could be
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3 revoked and he could be required to serve an additional term of imprisonment. He
4 was also explained that parole has been abolished.

5 D. Plea Agreement

6 The parties have entered into a written plea and that, upon being signed by the
7 government, defense attorney and defendant, was filed and made part of the record.
8 Defendant was clearly warned and recognized having understood that:

9 1. The plea agreement is not binding upon the sentencing court.

10 2. The plea agreement is an "agreement" between the defendant, defense
11 attorney and the attorney for the government which is presented as a
12 recommendation to the court in regards to the applicable sentencing adjustments
13 and guidelines, which are advisory.

14 3. The agreement provides a sentencing recommendation and/or anticipated
15 sentencing guideline computation, that can be either accepted or rejected by the
16 sentencing court.

17 4. In spite of the plea agreement and any sentencing recommendation
18 contained therein, the sentencing court retains full discretion to reject such plea
19 agreement and impose any sentence up to the possible maximum penalty prescribed
20 by statute.

21 Defendant acknowledged having understood this explanation. Defendant
22 further acknowledged that pleading guilty and entering into this plea may have a
23 negative effect upon defendant's immigration status with the United States.

24 E. Government's Evidence (Basis in Fact)

25 The government presented a proffer of its evidence with which the defendant
26 concurred.

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Accordingly, it is determined that there is a basis in fact and evidence to establish all elements of the offenses charged.

F. Voluntariness

The defendant accepted that no leniency had been promised, no threats had been made to induce him to plead guilty and that he did not feel pressured to plead guilty. He came to the hearing for the purpose of pleading guilty and listened attentively as the prosecutor outlined the facts which it would prove if the case had proceeded to trial.

IV. Conclusion

The defendant, by consent, has appeared before me pursuant to Rule 11, Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure, and has entered a plea of guilty as to count one of the indictment.

After cautioning and examining the defendant under oath and in open court, concerning each of the subject matters mentioned in Rule 11, as described in the preceding sections, I find that the defendant Antonio César Fernández-Durán is competent to enter this guilty plea, is aware of the nature of the offense charged and the maximum statutory penalties that the same carry, understands that the charge is supported by the government's evidence, has admitted to every element of the offense charged, and has done so in an intelligent and voluntary manner with full knowledge of the consequences of his guilty plea.

Therefore, I recommend that the court accept the guilty plea of the defendant and that the defendant be adjudged guilty as to count one of the indictment. At sentencing, the government will request the dismissal of count two pending against defendant.

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This report and recommendation is filed pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1)(B) and Rule 72(d) of the Local Rules of Court. Any objections to the same must be specific and must be filed with the Clerk of Court within five (5) days of its receipt. Rule 510.1, Local Rules of Court; Fed. R. Civ. P. 72(b). Failure to timely file specific objections to the report and recommendation is a waiver of the right to review by the district court. United States v. Valencia-Copete, 792 F.2d 4 (1st Cir. 1986).

At San Juan, Puerto Rico, this 13th day of October, 2005.

S/ JUSTO ARENAS
Chief United States Magistrate Judge